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To: INSTestimony
Subject: ACT 5553

Testimony Concerning 5553
Insurance Committee, 03/03/16
Jennifer Norton
Windsor Locks Animal Control Officer, Windsor Locks Police Department.

I would like to thank the Insurance Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Bill Number 5553 AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF BREED OF DOG AS AN UNDERWRITING FACTOR FOR HOMEOWNERS AND TENANTS INSURANCE POLICIES.

I work in the Animal Control field and have to admit that I see the current situation of breed bans negatively effecting the structure of animal adoptions.

Examples

- *Most of my nuisance dog or dog bite cases come from a wide variety of dog breeds (not just certain types of dogs.)*
- *I see a very large issue with finding good homes for certain breed dogs because of insurance bans. We have to consider euthanizing a well-mannered/healthy animal because the only interest placed is that of families with insurance restrictions.*
- *All dogs can be dangerous if not trained and socialized properly by their owner, I have seen more vicious dogs not on the restricted list than off the list and that makes no sense.*
- *If a landlord doesn't want their tenants to have animals, that is what needs to be clearly stated in the contract or agreement.*
- *I personally have a breed restriction where I live and am not allowed to own a Pit Bull Terrier, German shepherd, and Doberman, Rottweiler or Akita breed dog.*

One of the worst dog bites to date in my career was a yellow Labrador Retriever (considered an all American dog breed and a family dog). I understand some of the reasoning used to justify this ban being that some of these dogs listed are large and have a strong jaw but I believe that a lot of these dogs have a perception through our mainstream media and it is fear based. It is a fact that any dog is capable of biting and depending on the situation even the smallest of dogs can do irreversible damage to a human being or another animal. It is the human's responsibility to train, socialize or manage their pets and if this cannot be done then it's the human that is held accountable. Why can't we come up with a better system that allows the responsible dog owners a chance at being liable?

I am asking that we do away with specific breed bans for insurance purposes because all dogs carry the same amount of risk.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,
Jennifer Norton, Windsor Locks CT